

in the past and overcome them, and we will do so again. With sound policies in Washington and the ingenuity of our citizens, our economy will emerge from this period stronger and better than before.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:45 a.m. on July 18 in Tucson, AZ, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on July 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 18 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to the 2008 United States Summer Olympic and Paralympic Teams

July 21, 2008

Thanks. Welcome to the Rose Garden. Please sit down. We are thrilled to welcome members of the—America's 2008 Summer Olympic and Paralympic teams to the White House. Welcome.

Today we honor skill and discipline. You're here because of the support of your coaches and your trainers and your families and your friends. They are proud of what you've accomplished, and so are the American people. And we're looking forward to rooting for you in Beijing.

Mr. Secretary, thanks for coming. I want to welcome the U.S. Olympic Committee staff, welcome the military personnel who are with us, and welcome the rest of you. *[Laughter]*

In the coming days, around 600 American athletes will arrive in China for the 29th Olympic games. You're going to compete in 30 different sports, ranging from soccer to sailing and from judo to gymnastics. Together, the talented men and women of Team USA will represent the great diversity of our country. You come from nearly every State. Some of you are young—the youngest teammate is a 15-year-old diver—and some of you are old—er. *[Laughter]* There's a 58-year-old sailor, which gives this 62-year-old mountain biker hope—*[laughter]*—that you may need me in Beijing. *[Laughter]*

Team USA shows the great power of sports to bring people together, and there's no

sporting event that unites people like the Olympics. All Americans will rally behind you when you compete in Beijing.

We will be fascinated by the different stories behind each athlete. We will marvel at your hard work and your discipline; for example, the story of Matt Grevers. Matt seemed like a long shot to qualify for the U.S. team in the 100-meter backstroke. Because his parents are Dutch, the Netherlands tried to recruit Matt to swim for their team, offering him nearly a certain trip to Beijing. Instead, he chose to compete for the U.S. team and ended up qualifying in both the freestyle and the backstroke. And when he swims in Beijing, it will be as a proud citizen of the United States of America.

Or we think of the story of Lopez Lomong. When Lopez was just 6 years old, his family had to flee their village in Sudan when it was attacked by the Janjaweed. Lopez was separated from his family, who assumed he was dead. The little boy spent 3 years—3 days running from the militants and then 10 years in refugee camps. He finally made it to our country as a teenager, and his athletic career took off. Earlier this month, Lopez qualified for the Olympics in the 1500 meters. And now the boy who once had to run for his life is a man about to run for gold in Beijing, representing the United States of America.

And we think about Scott Winkler. Scott didn't spend his whole life training to become an elite athlete, but athletic competition helped give Scott his life back. Scott was an Army specialist serving in Iraq when an accident cost him the use of his legs. He found healing in the Wounded Warrior Project, in his work to mentor young people, and in wheelchair sports. Last month, a magnificent throw earned Scott an American record and a spot on the U.S. Paralympic team. And here's the way he put it: "I fought for this country, and now I'd love to win for this country in Beijing." Scott, we honor your service to our country; we thank you for coming today; and we'll be pulling for you.

America's Olympians have two very important things in common: God-given talent and an appreciation for the hard work required to achieve true excellence. The amazing athletic displays we see on our TV every 4 years

result from the hard work that our athletes put in during the 4 years. For us, it's a moment; for them, it's a moment—a life of dedication.

Olympians don't rest on their laurels; they wear them. [*Laughter*] Being a champion takes character, yet also entails responsibility. In Beijing, you'll convey our Nation's most cherished values. As ambassadors of liberty, you will represent America's love for freedom and our regard for human rights and human dignity. You'll represent to other athletes and to the people of China. In Beijing, you'll also represent our Nation's character. As ambassadors of good will, you will be humble in victory and gracious in defeat. And by showing respect for your competitors, you will demonstrate America's respect for the world.

Laura and I look forward to joining you for the Olympics. I'm fired up to go. [*Laughter*] I can't wait to salute our athletes, and I can't wait to share in the joy of your triumphs. And so today we send you off with congratulations on the success you have already achieved and on the accomplishments we know will be yours in Beijing.

May you and your teammates compete "swifter, higher, and stronger" in the games. And may God bless you as you represent our wonderful Nation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Fatmir Sejdiu and Prime Minister Hashim Thaci of Kosovo July 21, 2008

President Bush. It has been an honor to welcome the President and Prime Minister of an independent Kosovo to the Oval Office. I'm proud you all are here. I welcome you. I'm a strong supporter of Kosovo's independence; I'm against any partition of Kosovo. I believe strongly that the United Nations mission must be transferred to the EU as quickly as possible. I want to thank you very much for your support of minority rights, the full implementation of the Ahtisaari plan.

We discussed a variety of issues. We discussed the problems that Kosovo faces, its

desire to be recognized by more nations around the world. I pledged that the United States would continue to work with those nations that have not recognized an independent Kosovo to convince them to do so as quickly as possible.

We talked about economics, education. And we talked about the transatlantic aspirations of both Kosovo and Serbia, which the United States supports in both cases.

I mentioned to both these leaders that they were sitting right below the portrait of George Washington, the Founder of a free United States. And I appreciate your courage. I appreciate your leadership. And I commit the United States to help you realize your dreams. Welcome.

President Sejdiu. It's an extraordinary occasion for us to be received by President Bush to convey to him all the aspirations and all the thanks of the Kosovo people—heartfelt thanks.

The Kosovo people have been following democracy—the principles of democracy and freedom. And the United States are—they are supporters. We guarantee the—President Bush that we will continue on this road, and at the same time to implement the Ahtisaari document.

Kosovo will be a country of democracy, a country of all its citizens. It will have a special respect for the minorities. We are very much interested to have good relations with the Republic of Serbia. Our progress will be with integration of NATO and EU.

Again, my heartfelt thanks, and God bless America.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Thaci. Today's meeting with President Bush not only reiterates the fact that we are closely connected with the United States, but will always be their trustful friend—

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Prime Minister Thaci. —forever.

We have always trusted the United States and trusted the development of our country and that it will be to the benefit of the international development.

The Kosovo Government and the Kosovo people will always bow in deep respect for